

<https://www.smh.com.au/culture/art-and-design/entrance-moved-as-new-powerhouse-ultimo-plans-revealed-20221209-p5c54d.html>

Entrance moved as new Powerhouse Ultimo plans revealed

Powerhouse reveals new horizons, new opening (in print)



By **Linda Morris**

December 12, 2022 — 5.10am

KEY POINTS

- The entrance to Ultimo's Powerhouse Museum will be moved as part of the new plans for the building.
- Patrons will now enter from the Goods Line facing Chinatown.
- Construction is expected to start in December 2023, closing the museum for up to two years.

The Powerhouse Museum's main entrance will be swung around to front Darling Harbour and Chinatown as part of the winning design for its \$500 million refurbishment.

A new public square, rooftop gardens and multi-storey annex running the length of Harris Street across its now bare forecourt is included in the refurbishment.



The winning design and the new extension along Harris Street.

The museum's 1988-built arched atrium extension to the heritage-listed buildings of the Ultimo Power Station and the old post office, known as the Wran Building, is to be demolished.

It currently forms its public entrance and houses its temporary exhibition space.

It will be replaced by a four-storey building with street-level access to a library and archives, and upstairs accommodation for 60 school children with options to sleep under the stars in a rooftop garden.

At the building's rear will be an expanded public park next to the old Ultimo post office.

The museum's new entrance will be reoriented to the Goods Line with a large public square planted out with native species and an event space for museum programs.



The Wran Building completed in 1988 for the Bicentenary. A public garden will be built behind the post office. *CREDIT: BROOK MITCHELL*

The concept is the work of Architectus, Durbach Block Jagers Architects, Tyrrell Studio, Youssofzay + Hart, Finding Infinity and Arup who were “unanimously” selected from a shortlist of five architectural teams to reimagine the museum's city home.

They will be partnered by iconic fashion designer Akira Isogawa, whose fashion features in the Powerhouse collection, and the Indigenous design start-up Yerrabingin.

Their design was inspired by local cultural topography, with the new multi-storey addition leaning away from heritage-listed buildings to resemble an escarpment.

No longer would the Powerhouse Museum turn its back on Harris Street and Ultimo, chief executive Lisa Havilah said.

Iconic objects from the Powerhouse collection including the Boulton and Watt engine, Locomotive No. 1 and the Catalina flying boat will be presented in the renewed Powerhouse Ultimo, Havilah said, along with other large objects from its collection.

Jury chair Wendy Lewin said the winning proposal called for a “family of strong masonry buildings” of a scale and materiality that respected heritage and responded sensitively to the Ultimo surrounds.

“The winning scheme is underpinned by a compelling and coherent vision for the renewal of the Powerhouse Ultimo site and the broader precinct,” she said.

“The design approach centres on making subtle moves appropriate to the site – at times via gentle intervention and repair, at others through ambitious moves that enable the site to be ‘unlocked’ to provide a distinctive and highly functional museum experience.”



An interior courtyard of the new Powerhouse Museum.

Last year, the Perrottet Government [committed up to \\$500 million](#) to the makeover, the first major investment in the museum since 1988.

Following today's announcement, the winning architects will develop their concept plans and a detailed development application is expected to go out for public submissions early next year. Construction is expected to start December 2023, closing the museum for up to two years depending on the final design.

Collection items currently on exhibition in Ultimo will be taken to international standard collection storage facilities.

In all, there will be six museum exhibition spaces that will present a changing applied arts and applied sciences program, Arts Minister Ben Franklin said.

These museum exhibition spaces will include the Boiler and Turbine Halls. The Powerhouse Museum said the renewed museum would offer more than 17,000 square metres in exhibition and public space.

In addition, the new design included 1500 square metres in learning and community space and 5000 square metres of space for museum programming, community use and civic events. Importantly, the design is said to centralise circulation to create a more cohesive museum experience.



The Powerhouse's main public square looking back from Good's Line and planted with native species.

“I am particularly excited about the new Powerhouse Academy, which will offer a rooftop camp for secondary and tertiary students from regional NSW and beyond, providing an immersive learning experience in the heart of the city,” Franklin said.

“This will provide a range of new opportunities for young people right across the state to engage with and explore the Powerhouse Ultimo’s internationally renowned exhibitions.”

It’s hoped the redevelopment will arrest a decline in visitation, [now at 20-year lows](#).

Architectus and the engineering firm Arup worked alongside the Japanese design team SANAA on Sydney Modern, the new wing of the Art Gallery of NSW which drew 86,000 visitors in its opening week.



The “ridgeline” of the museum’s new development.

A shortlist of five Australian teams was invited to develop a detailed redesign for the museum’s home, which opened 34 years ago for Australia’s bicentenary.

Concept plans for the museum’s 2.4-hectare site, which went out for public comment earlier this year, had been opposed by the [vast majority of submissions](#), which complained the museum was being turned into a glorified function entertainment centre.

NGA facing job cuts and shutdowns in shortfall

From Page 1

institutions to the brink." A review by KPMG into the financial sustainability of all national collecting institutions was commissioned by the Federal Office of Arts before the May election.

Access to this report, which also showed the future viability of the Australian National Maritime Museum, National Portrait Gallery, National Library and the NGA, was reduced on the basis it was a document prepared for cabinet.

A spokesperson for the National Gallery said the institution would have to consider all options. "The minister clearly understands our financial position, and we are working with him on this."

The NGA is home to the country's largest public collection, valued at \$4.9 billion. Its public assets are said to be among the nation's largest, topped only by Defence, Senator David the Honorable Patrick, and the Treasury.

Independent senator David Pascoe called for an urgent examination of the gallery's funding. National collecting institutions, not just the NGA, are subject to a public service-wide efficiency dividend and a further government savings measure, introduced in 2015, that now sets a 1 per cent three-day target.

Pascoe said: "Our National Gallery in particular is in a financially perilous state and without urgent action, there's a real risk serious measures will need to be implemented to cut costs."

"I understand such measures could include reduced opening hours, even closing its doors by as much as two days per week, versus normal weekdays at nine, as well as other cost-cutting measures."

"The National Gallery is valued worldwide in the country, one that helps to tell the story of us and our evolving culture. It brings us together and it does this good if it can't generate, create, attract or spend available to the Australian public for it."

The Powerhouse Museum's main entrance will be moving, central to the Darling Harbour and Chinatown as part of the winning design for a \$600 million redevelopment.

A new public square, rooftop gardens and multi-storey atrium running the length of Harris Street across its new main facade is included in the redevelopment.

The museum's 1988-built art collection museum to the heritage-listed buildings of the Ultime Power Station and the old post office, known as the Wran Building, is to be demolished. It currently forms a public entrance and houses a temporary exhibition space.

It will be replaced by a four-storey building with street-level access to a library and archives, and upstairs accommodation for 60 school children with 1000sq m of space under the stairs in a rooftop atrium.

All the buildings' rear walls will be expanded public park space to the old Chinatown precinct.

The museum's new entrance will be moved to the Glass Line, with a large public square to be planted out with native species and an event space for museum programmes.

The concept is the work of Architects, Durban Block Angus Architects, Terrell Studio, Youensday + Hart, Finding Infirry and Jorg, who were separately selected from a shortlist of five architectural teams to reimagine the museum's city space.

This will be part of a wider fashion designer Akira Nogawa, whose fashion features in the Powerhouse collection, and the indulgent design start-up Yerrahgah.

No longer would the museum be a collection of "disconnected buildings" of various materials that respected heritage and reproduced elements by the Ultime surrounds.

"The winning scheme is underpinned by a compelling and coherent vision for the repositioned Powerhouse Museum site and the broader precinct," she said.

"The design approach centres on making public spaces appropriate to the site - at times via gentle intervention and repair, at others through ambitious moves that make the site to be 'unboxed' to provide a distinctive



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Plans show a fresh look on viewing the museum, writes Linda Morris.

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These museum exhibition spaces will include the Skoler and Turbin Hall. The Powerhouse Museum said the renewed

community use and civic events. The design is said to centralise circulation to create a more cohesive museum experience and an "particularly notable" feature is the new Powerhouse Academy, which will offer a rooftop-campfire secondary and

tertiary students from regional NSW and beyond. Franklin said: "This will provide a range of new opportunities for young people to engage with the museum."

As a result of the redevelopment, it will arrive a decline in visitation, up to 30 per cent.

Architects and the engineering firm Jorg worked alongside the Japanese design team SANAA on Sydney Motors, the new wing of the Art Gallery of NSW which is now \$100 million in the opening week.

A shortlist of five Australian teams was invited to develop a redesign for the museum's main, which opened 34 years ago for the Bicentenary.

Concern plans for the museum's 2.8 hectares, which went out for public consultation earlier this year, had been approved by the vast majority of the museum was being turned into a significant function entertainment centre.

Writing plans were made by a team built from architectural firms Architects, Durban Block Angus Architects, Terrell Studio, Youensday + Hart, Finding Infirry and Jorg. Photo: Hugh Stewart

Investment in the multistorey facade Parramatta would ensure support to bring the Legos to Sydney under Labor plans to award a far greater share of government and tourism dollars to western Sydney.

The region had been "sold down the river" in terms of cultural policy, the NSW opposition will call a portfolio of business and cultural leaders today.

"We will still the focus away from a traditional arts policy to towards the cultural and creative industries," he says. "We want to spend just funding the big cultural institutions in the city's east."

At a high-level event hosted by the University of Technology Sydney, Opposition Leader Chris Minns will compare Labor to a new focus on science, music, fashion, art, architecture, design and technology.

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Three months before the March election opens a potentially new election battleground between the main parties around questions of cultural investment and equity.

"The Riverside Theatre is incomplete, the Play Theatre is dormant and the Parramatta Feeder Factory remains an unfulfilled jewel of the state's heritage and history," Graham will say.

"Great institutions like the Cecilia Powerhouse are starved of funds and have to lay off staff. And what of the new Western Sydney Airport at Bradfield? Where are the plans for theatres, live music, cinema and libraries in this new 34-hour precinct?"

"It would see a monumental tragedy if thousands of Sydney jobs are lost to the east of the city in the next few years."

The past decade in NSW has been marked by record capital spending in the arts, led by the Sydney Motors project, and unprecedented government support for the arts sector during COVID-19.

While Labor makes no specific funding announcement, a new arts policy would focus on the specific arts sector and visiting state-funded cultural institutions while ensuring wider creative sectors.

"The truth for creative people in NSW is it is not unusual to move between the cultural institutions or the publicly funded arts sector and other jobs. This is a talented, mobile, innovative and enterprising sector."

That requires a discussion in administration, which encompasses rather than simply grant funding, the arts and required involvement of all departments.

Parramasala tops Logies for tourism: NSW Labor

Linda Morris

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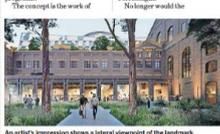
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An artist's impression shows a lateral view of the landmark.



Writing plans were made by a team built from architectural firms Architects, Durban Block Angus Architects, Terrell Studio, Youensday + Hart, Finding Infirry and Jorg. Photo: Hugh Stewart